DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON
JORGE CORONA
SARAH STERN
TRANSFORMERS
image
#16

ENERGON UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMERS

ISSUE SIXTEEN

DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON
WRITER

JORGE CORONA
ARTIST

SARAH STERN
COLORIST

RUS WOOTON
LETTERER

COVERS

DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON & MIKE SPICER
JORGE CORONA & MIKE SPICER
KARL KERSCHL
MANABU YASHIRO
HOMARE
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MICO SUAYAN
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BEN ABERNATHY
EDITOR

ANDRES JUAREZ
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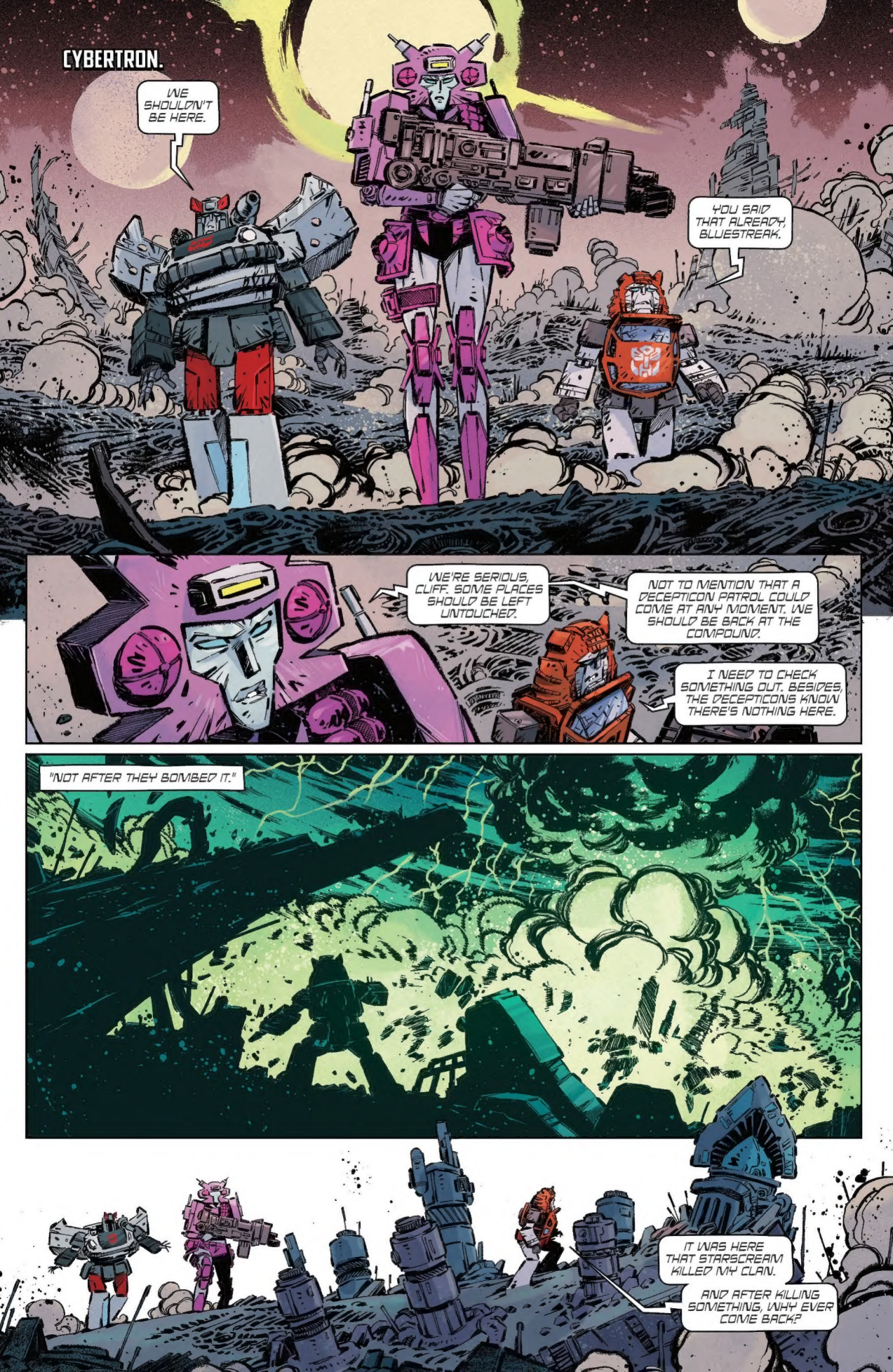

CYBERTRON.
WE SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
YOU SAID THAT ALREADY, BLUESTREAK.
WE'RE SERIOUS, CLIFF. SOME PLACES SHOULD BE LEFT UNTOUCHED.
NOT TO MENTION THAT A DECEPTICON PATROL COULD COME AT ANY MOMENT. WE SHOULD BE BACK AT THE COMPOUND.
I NEED TO CHECK SOMETHING OUT. BESIDES, THE DECEPTICONS KNOW THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
"NOT AFTER THEY BOMBED IT."
IT WAS HERE THAT STARSCREAM KILLED MY CLAN.
AND AFTER KILLING SOMETHING, WHY EVER COME BACK?

THAT'S WHY I PUT THEM HERE.
WHERE NOBODY WOULD FIND THEM.
A SPARK CANNISTER?!
--ARE THOSE--?
THERE'S ONLY PIECES OF EACH OF MY FRIENDS LEFT. NOT ENOUGH TO BRING ANY ONE OF THEM BACK.
BUT MAYBE ENOUGH TO MAKE SOMETHING NEW.

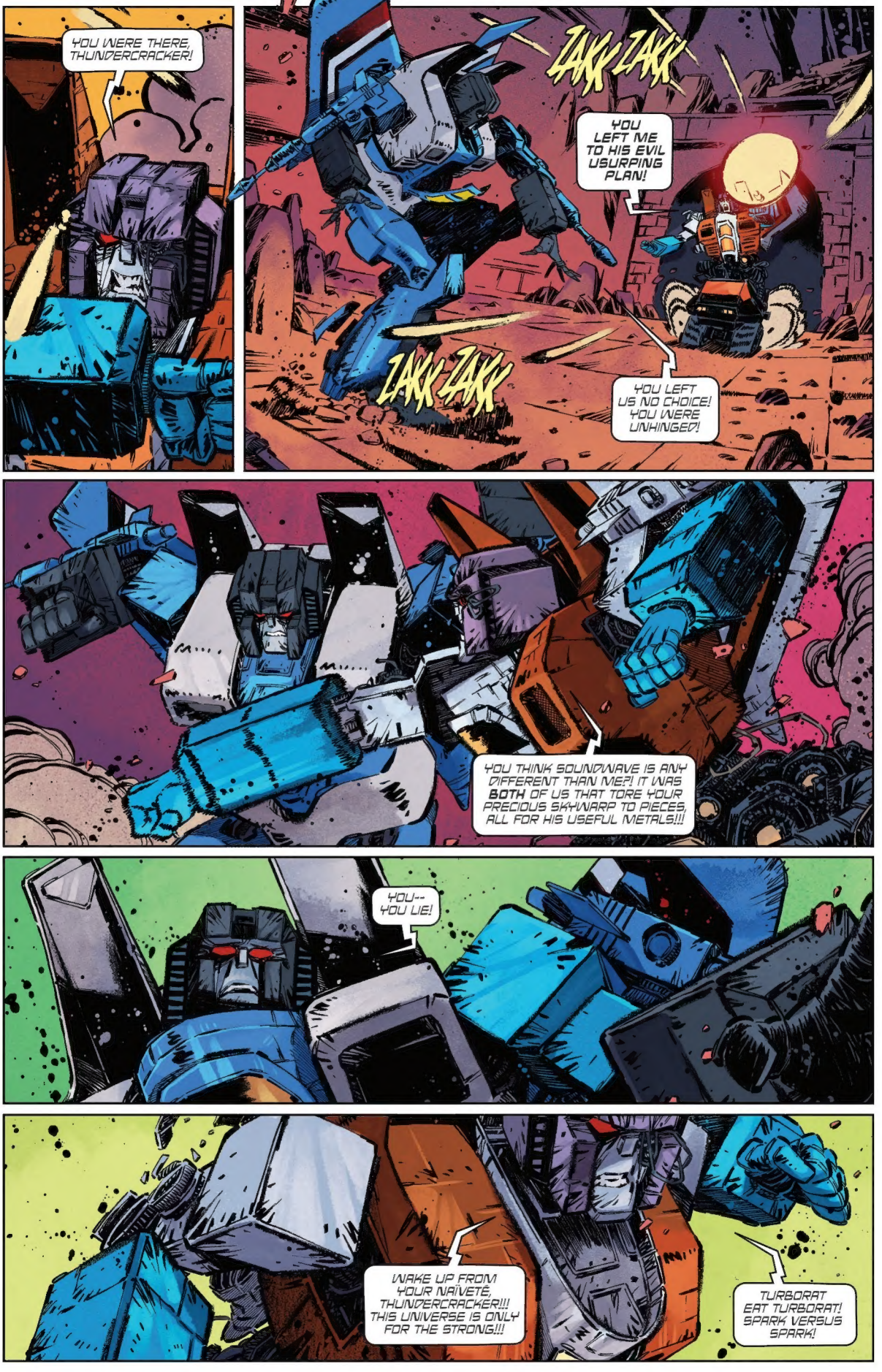
EARTH.
CONSTRUCTICONS!
WE WILL TAKE IT FROM HERE, LEADER SOUNDWAVE!!!!
CONSTRUCTICONS, COMBINE!
PREPARE FOR DEVASTATION, BRUTICUS!!!
WE MUST GET OUT OF THE WAY! RUN, AUTOBOTS!
BUT MY MACHINE--
JUMP!!!
GHOM

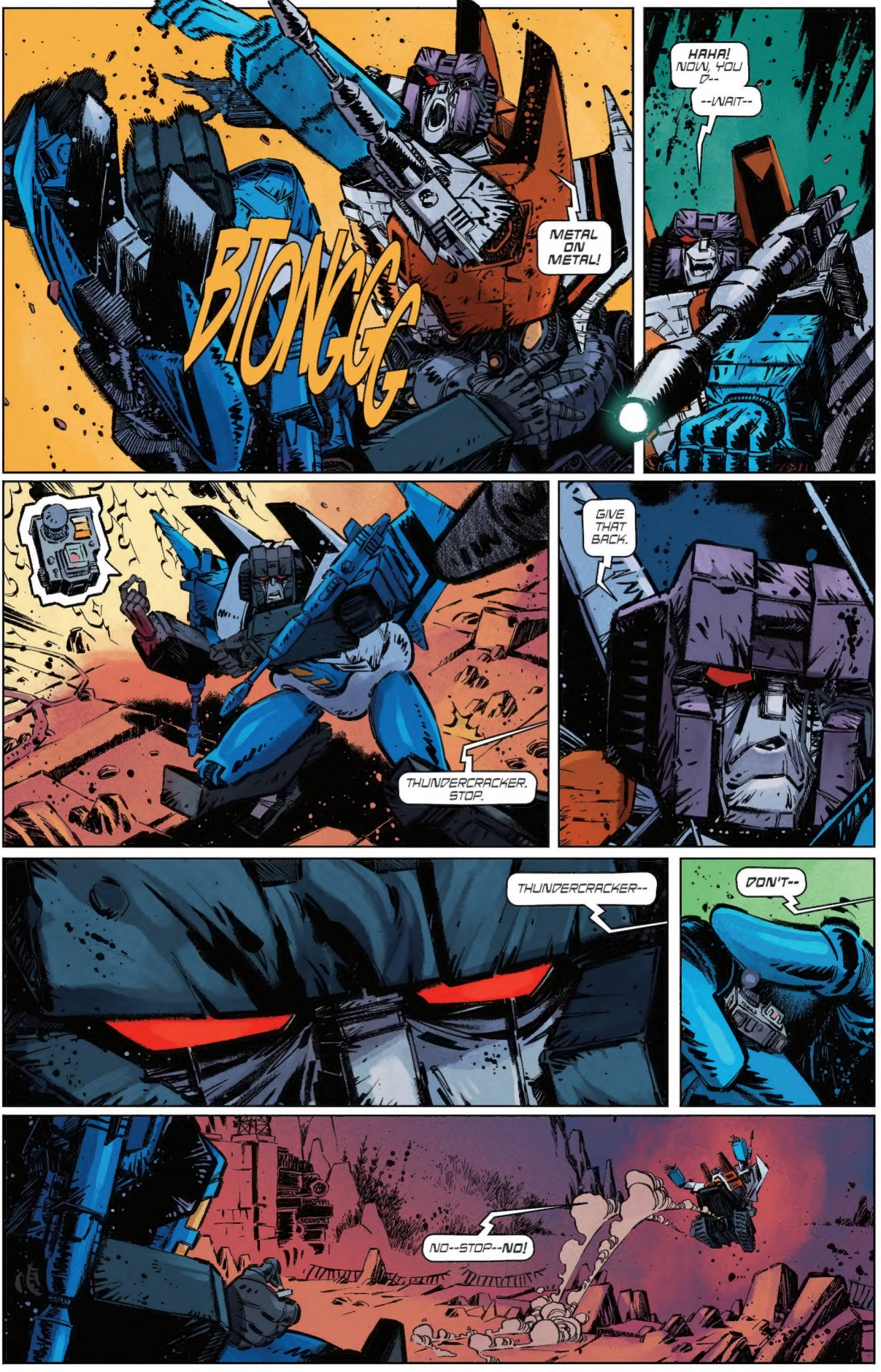
KROOMMM

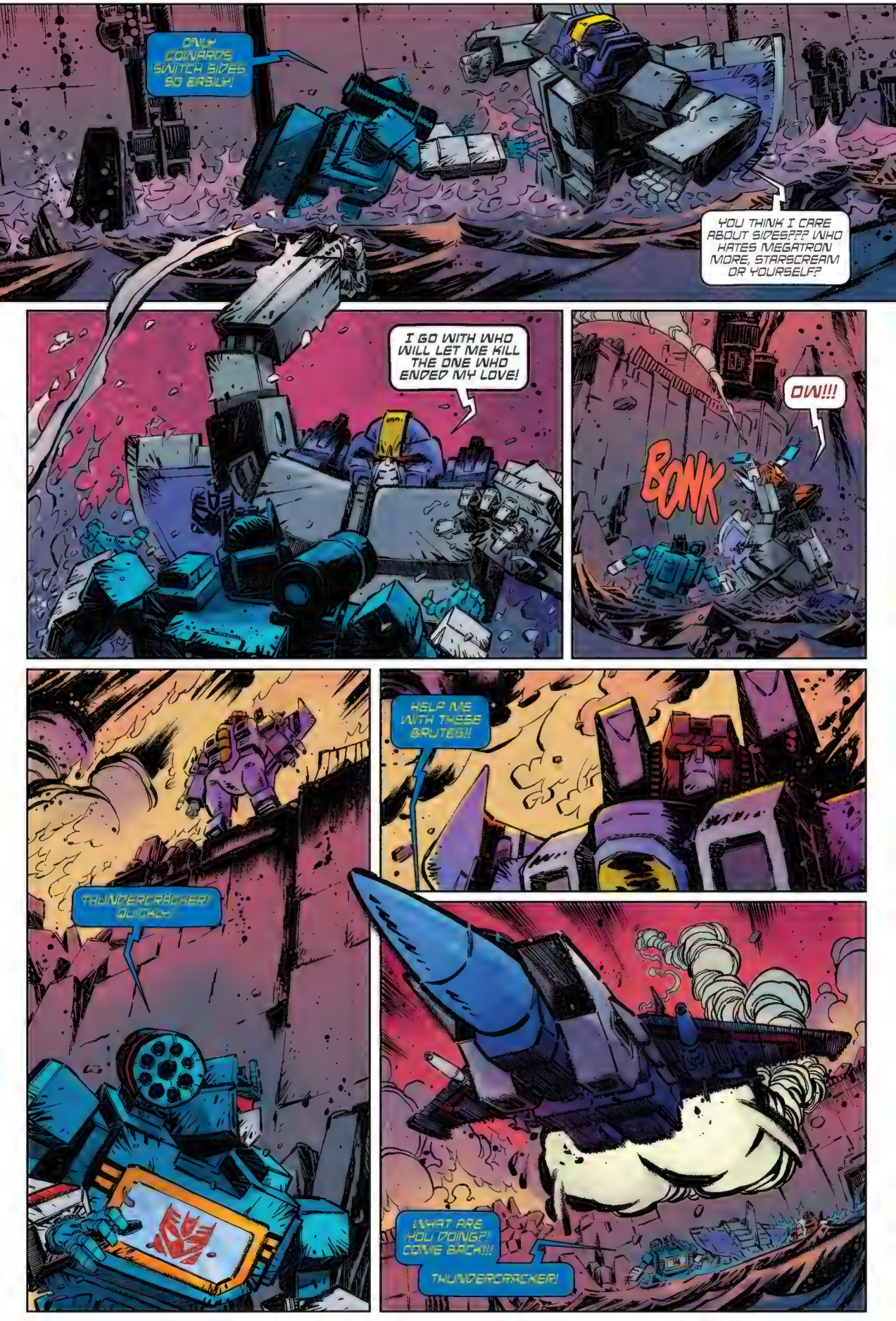
KILL! KILL! KILL!

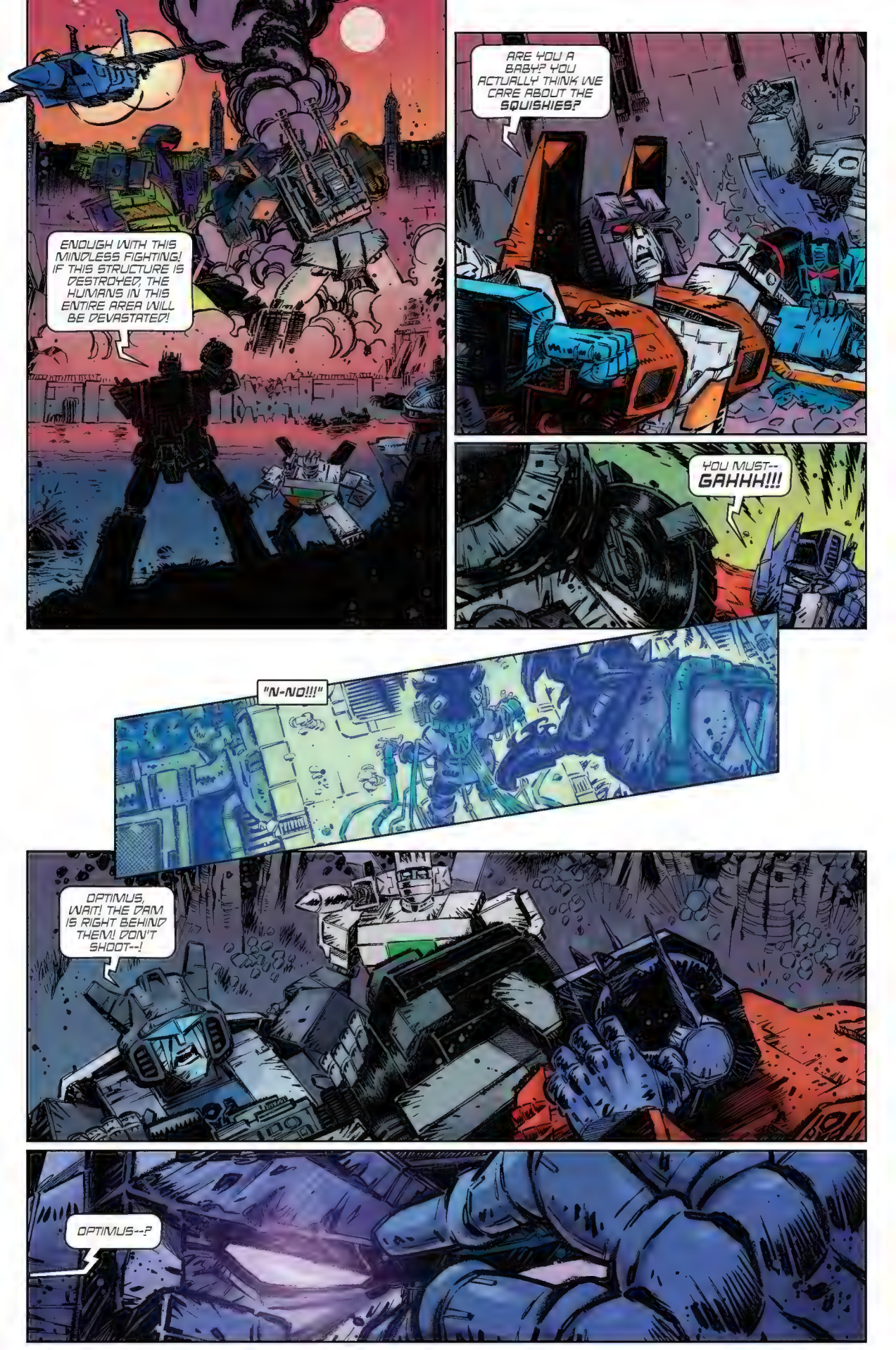
KEVIN! LOOK!
...WHOA.
STARSCREAM! HOW DO YOU STILL FUNCTION?!
SNIVELING FOOL! YOU CANNOT KILL WHAT IS UNKILLABLE!
I CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR YOURSELF!!!
SHOVE
WHAT--

CHOOO CH
HAHAHA!
ZRAPP
ZRAPP
STARSCREAM, WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!?!

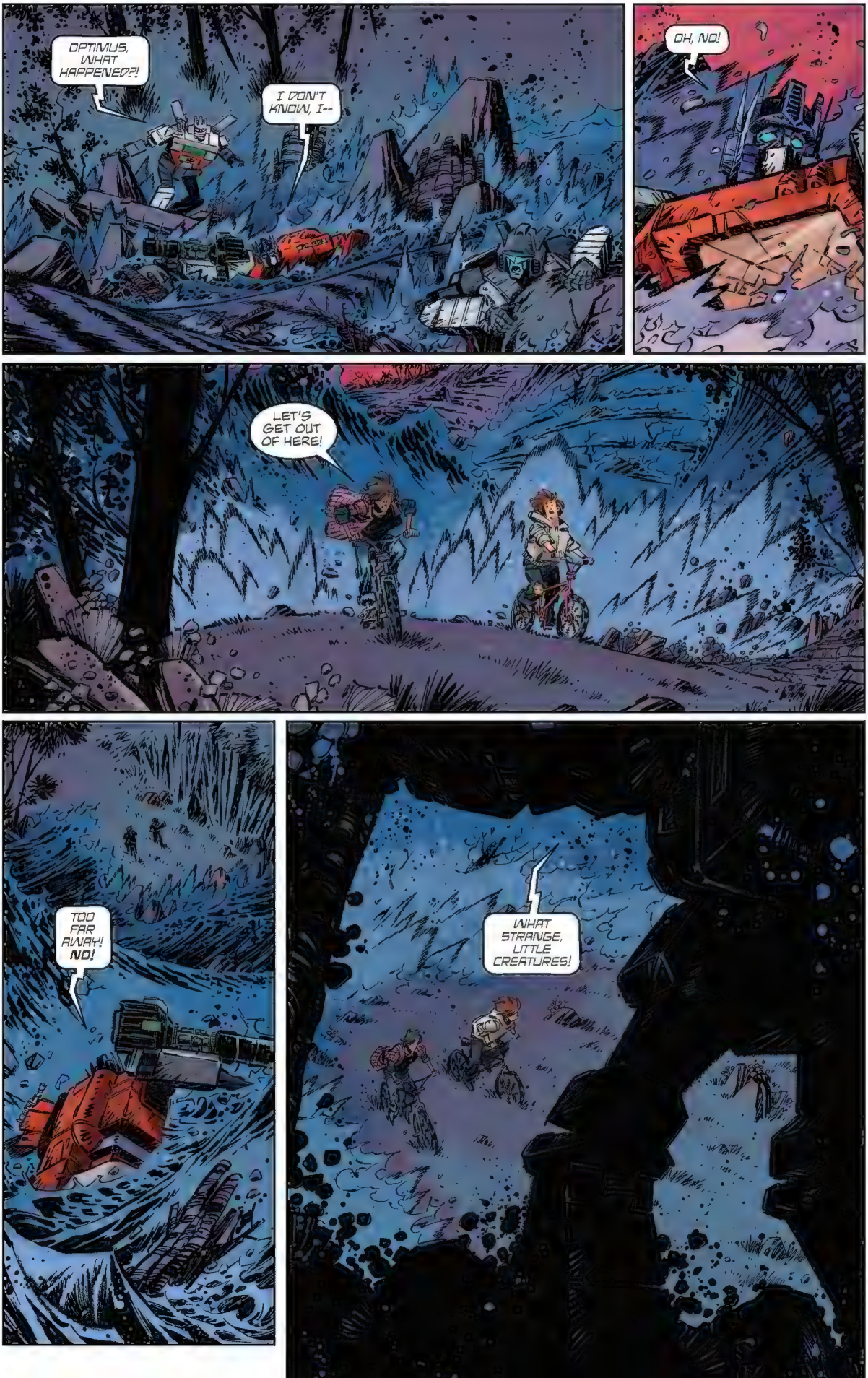

YOU WERE THERE, THUNDERCRACKER!
ZAKK ZAKK
YOU LEFT ME TO HIS EVIL USURPING PLAN!
ZAKK ZAKK
YOU LEFT US NO CHOICE! YOU WERE UNHINGED!
YOU THINK SOUNDWAVE IS ANY DIFFERENT THAN ME?! IT WAS BOTH OF US THAT TORE YOUR PRECIOUS SKYWARP TO PIECES, ALL FOR HIS USEFUL METALS!!!
YOU-- YOU LIE!
WAKE UP FROM YOUR NAÏVETÉ, THUNDERCRACKER!!! THIS UNIVERSE IS ONLY FOR THE STRONG!!!
TURBORAT EAT TURBORAT! SPARK VERSUS SPARK!

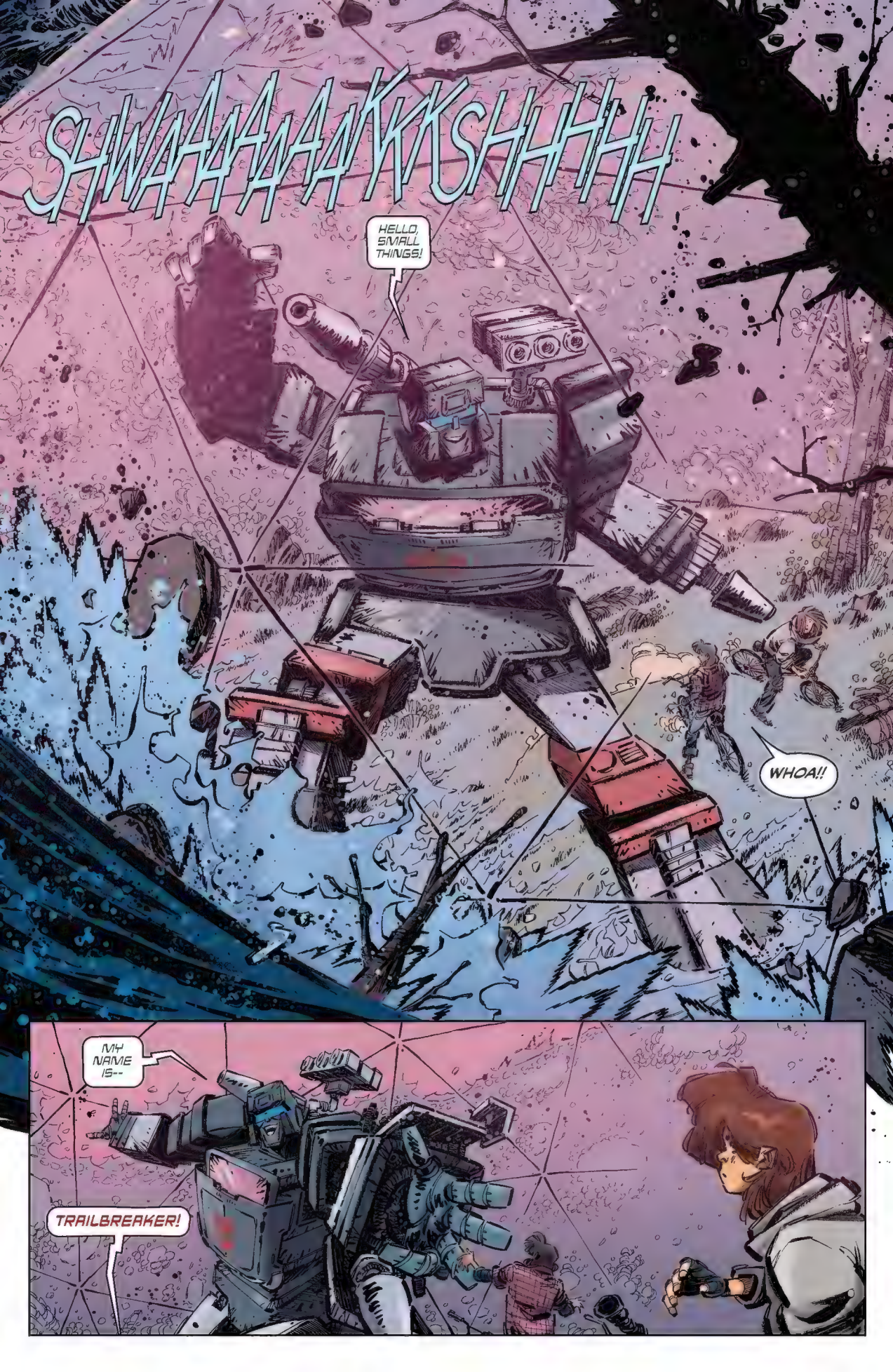

BTONGG
METAL ON METAL!
HAHA! NOW, YOU D--
--WAIT--
THUNDERCRACKER. STOP.
GIVE THAT BACK.
THUNDERCRACKER--
DON'T--
NO--STOP--NO!

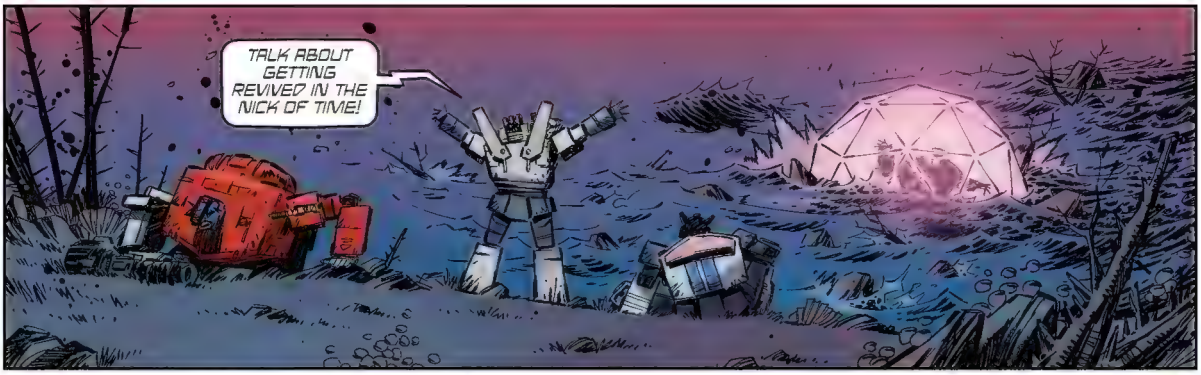

ONLY COWARDS SWITCH SIDES SO EASILY!
YOU THINK I CARE ABOUT SIDES??? WHO HATES MEGATRON MORE, STARSCREAM OR YOURSELF?
I GO WITH WHO WILL LET ME KILL THE ONE WHO ENDED MY LOVE!
OW!!!
BONK
THUNDERCRACKER! QUICKLY!
HELP ME WITH THESE BRUTES!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! COME BACK!!!
THUNDERCRACKER!

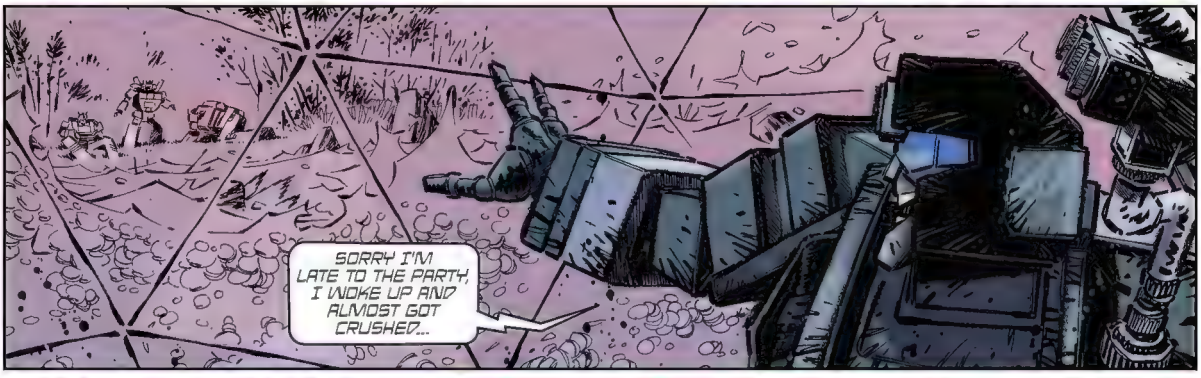

ENOUGH WITH THIS MINDLESS FIGHTING! IF THIS STRUCTURE IS DESTROYED, THE HUMANS IN THIS ENTIRE AREA WILL BE DEVASTATED!
ARE YOU A BABY? YOU ACTUALLY THINK WE CARE ABOUT THE SQUISHIES?
YOU MUST-- GAHHH!!!
"N-NO!!!"
OPTIMUS, WAIT! THE DAM IS RIGHT BEHIND THEM! DON'T SHOOT--!
OPTIMUS--?

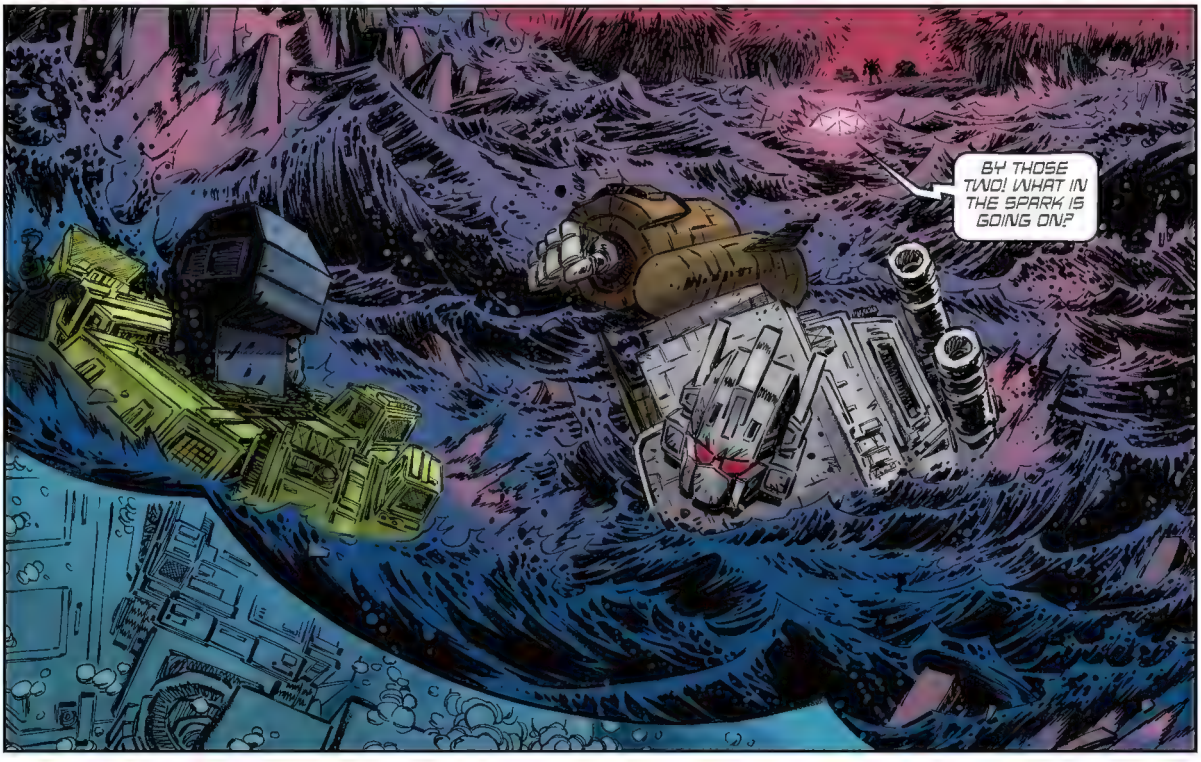
SHKROWWZZZ
KOMMM
CRKKKKKK
EH?
PLMMMMMBLE
SHHHHHH
YEOW!!!

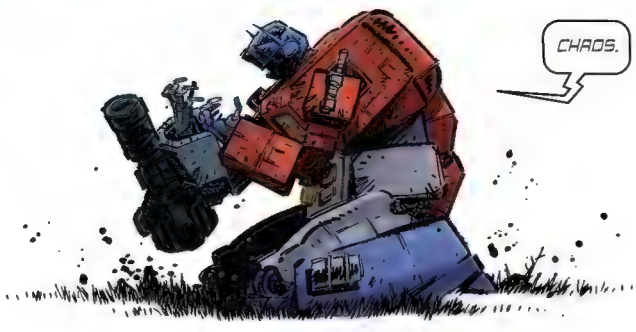

OPTIMUS, WHAT HAPPENED?!
I DON'T KNOW, I--
OH, NO!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
TOO FAR AWAY! NO!
WHAT STRANGE, LITTLE CREATURES!

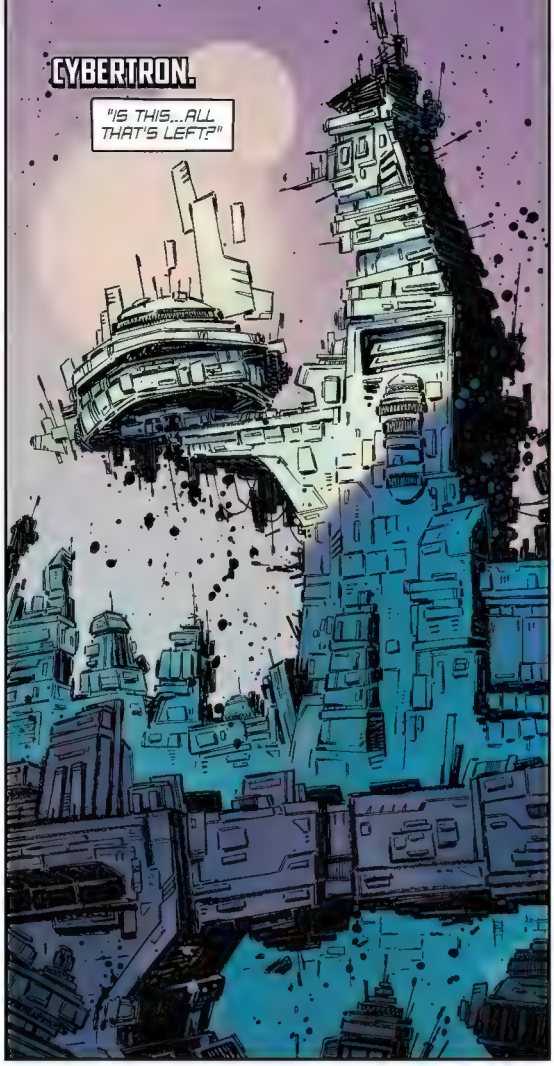

SHWAAAAAAKKKSHHHH
HELLO, SMALL THINGS!
WHOA!!
MY NAME IS--
TRAILBREAKER!


TALK ABOUT GETTING REVIVED IN THE NICK OF TIME!


SORRY I'M LATE TO THE PARTY. I WOKE UP AND ALMOST GOT CRUSHED...

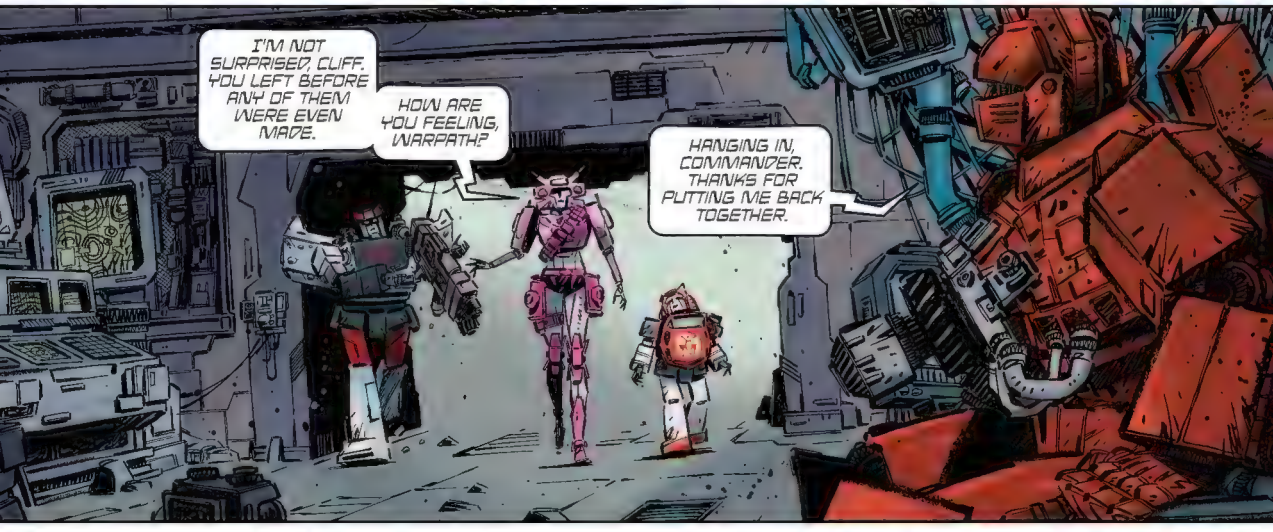

BY THOSE TWO! WHAT IN THE SPARK IS GOING ON?

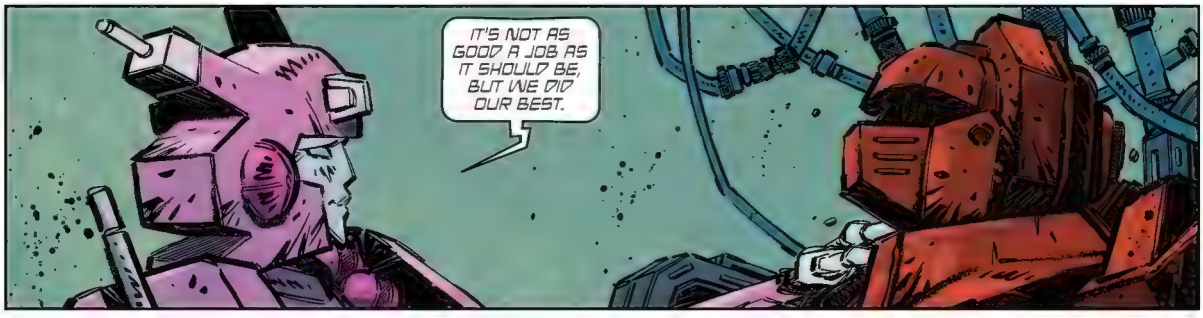

CHAOS.

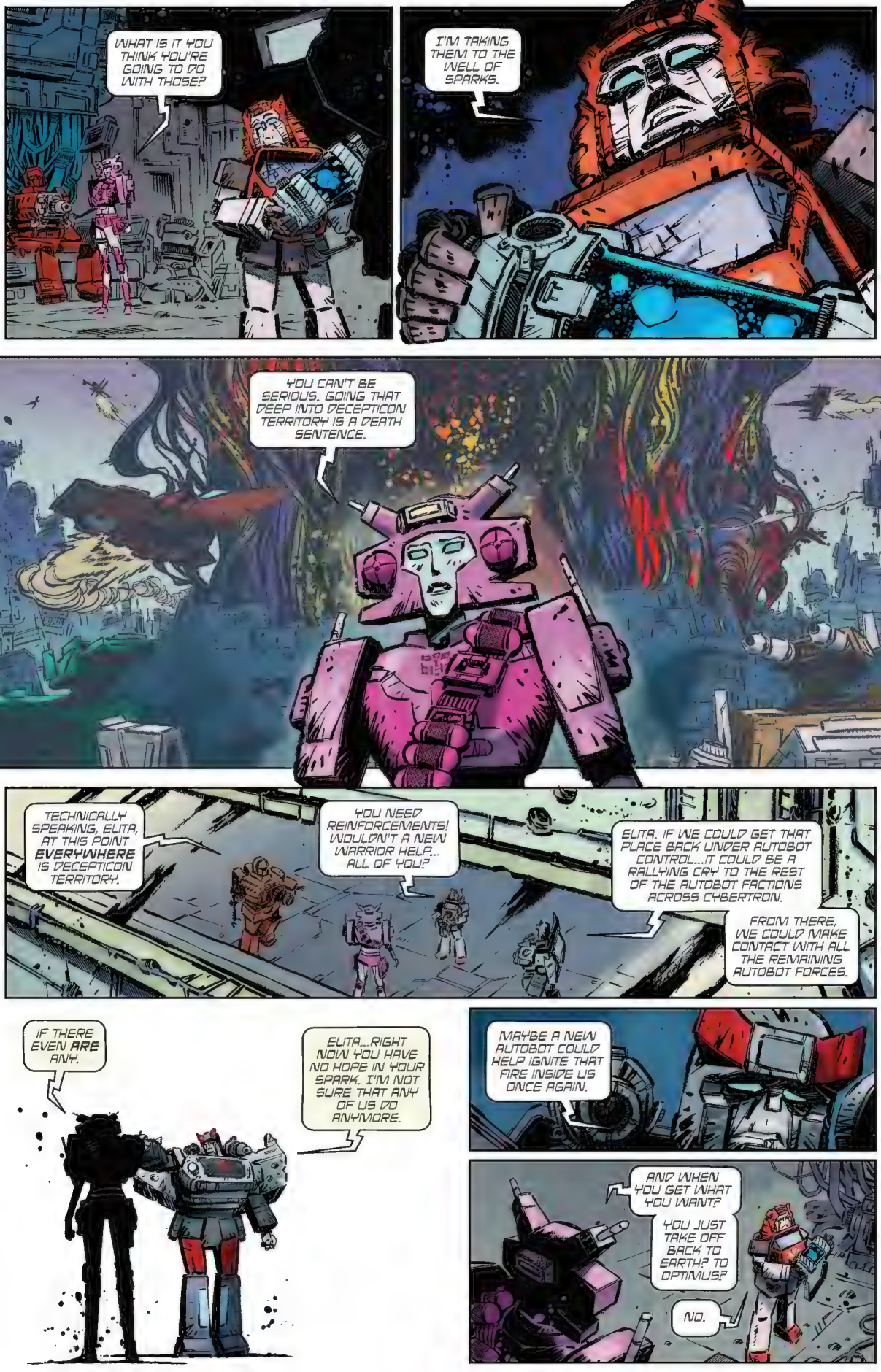

CYBERTRON.
"IS THIS...ALL THAT'S LEFT?"

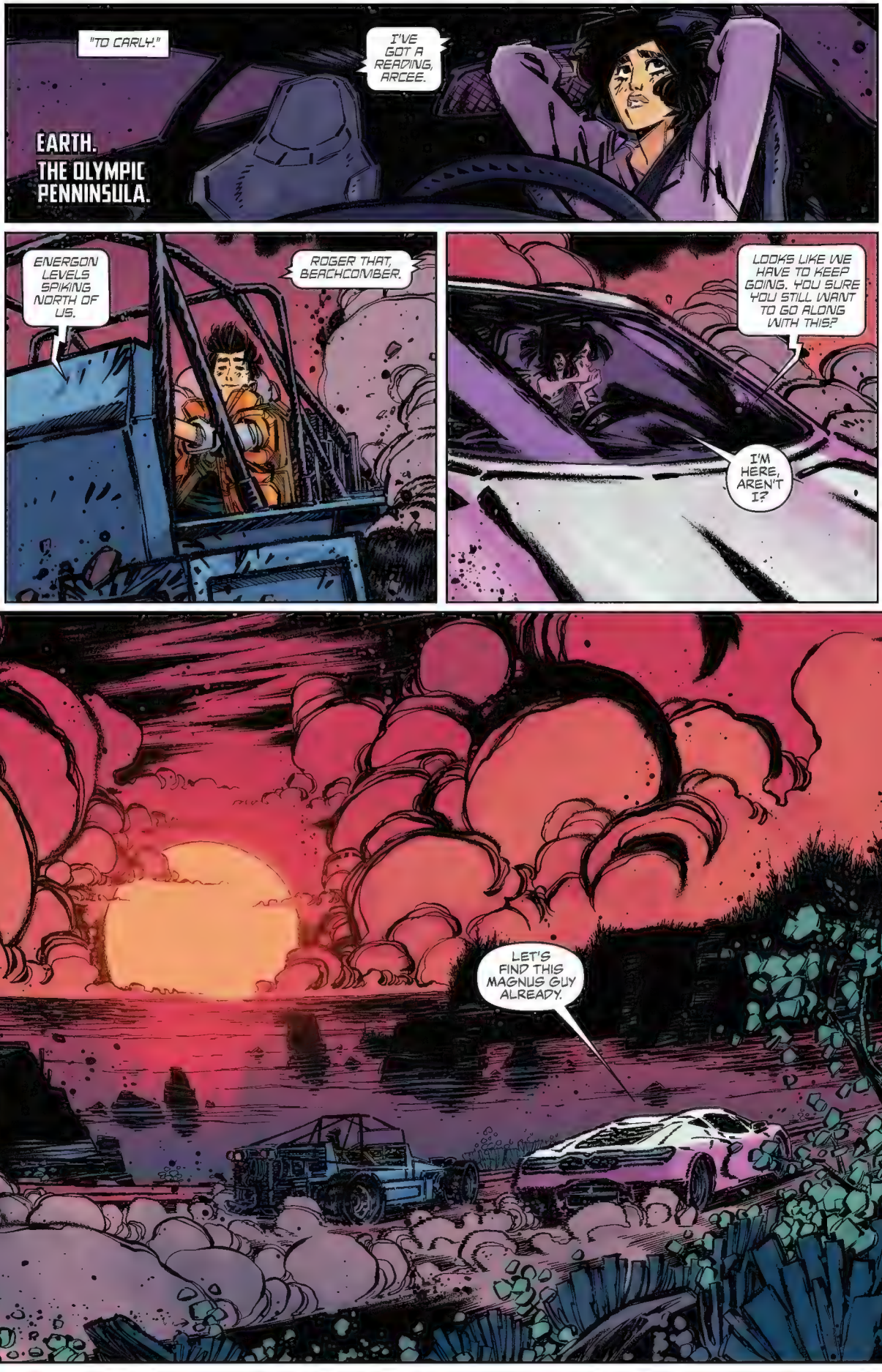
IN THIS SECTOR. SINCE THE DECEPTICONS FOUND A WAY TO INTERCEPT OUR LONG RANGE COMMUNICATIONS, WE'VE BEEN UNAWARE WHAT OTHER PARTS OF CYBERTRON STILL HAVE A RESISTANCE.

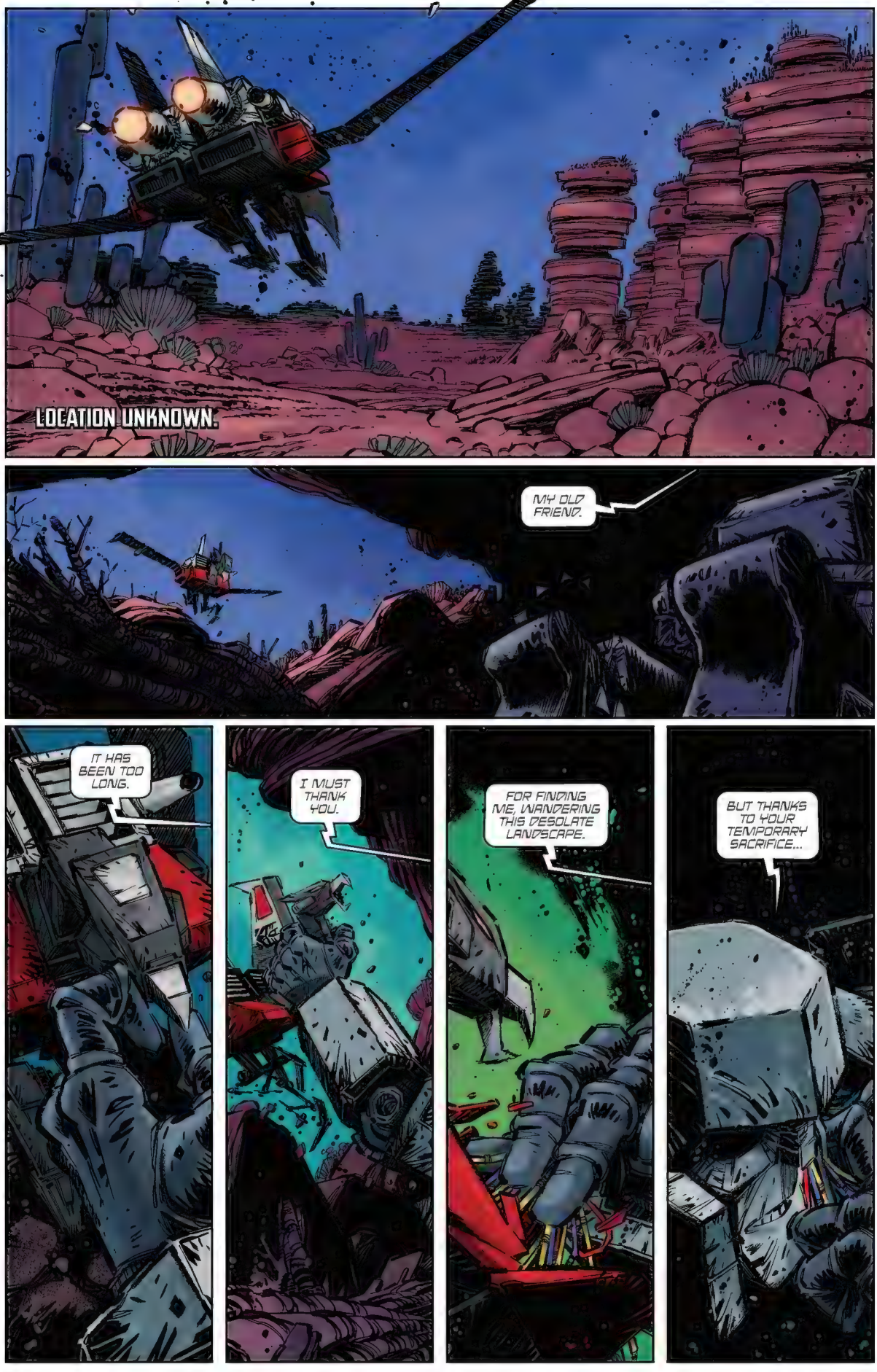
FOR ALL I KNOW, WE'RE THE ONLY AUTOBOTS STILL FUNCTIONING.
I...DON'T RECOGNIZE ANYBODY.

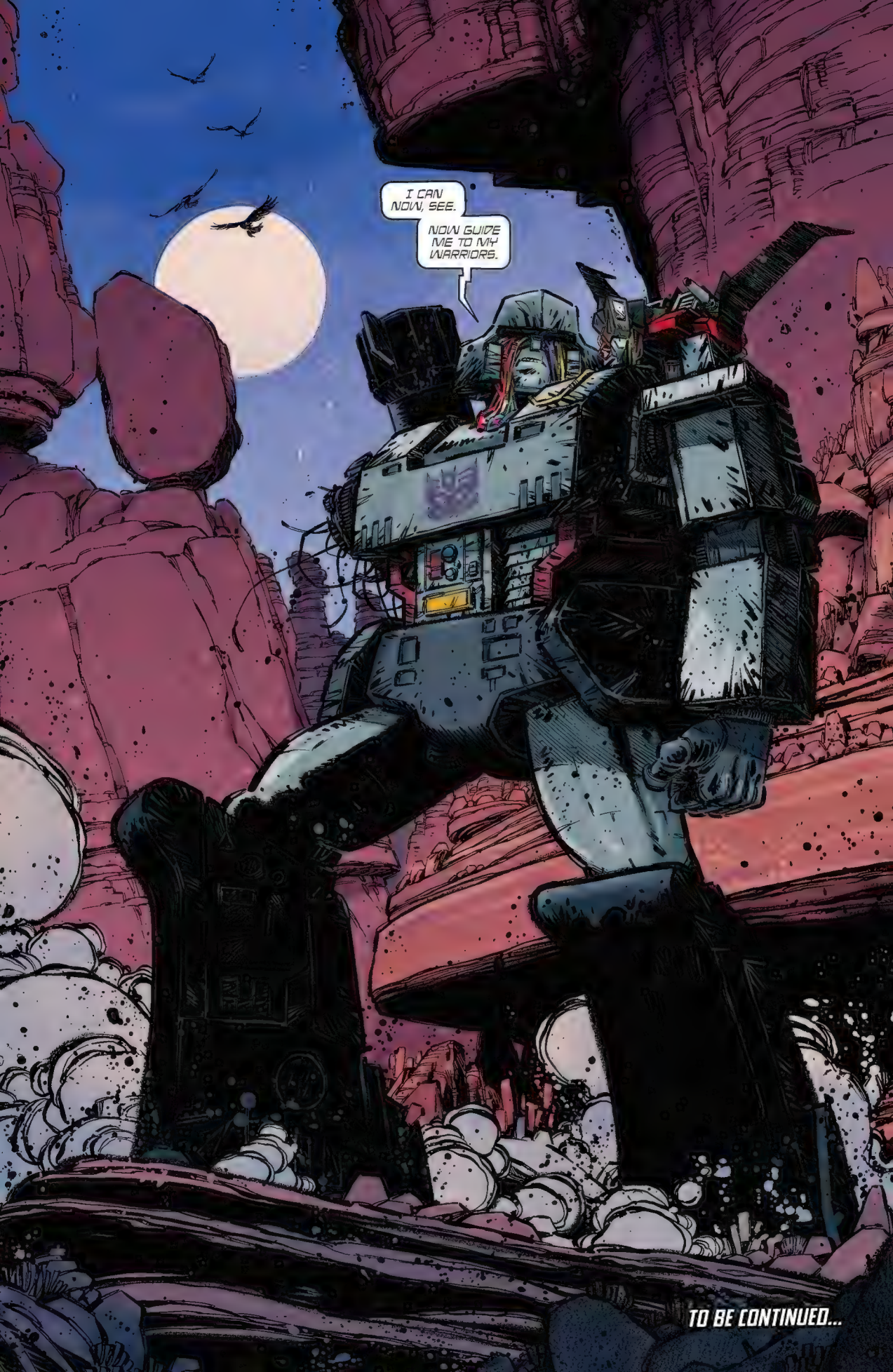

I'M NOT SURPRISED, CLIFF. YOU LEFT BEFORE ANY OF THEM WERE EVEN MADE.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, WARPATH?
HANGING IN, COMMANDER. THANKS FOR PUTTING ME BACK TOGETHER.


IT'S NOT AS GOOD A JOB AS IT SHOULD BE, BUT WE DID OUR BEST.


WHAT IS IT YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO DO WITH THOSE?
I'M TAKING THEM TO THE WELL OF SPARKS.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. GOING THAT DEEP INTO DECEPTICON TERRITORY IS A DEATH SENTENCE.
TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, ELITA, AT THIS POINT EVERYWHERE IS DECEPTICON TERRITORY.
YOU NEED REINFORCEMENTS! WOULDN'T A NEW WARRIOR HELP... ALL OF YOU?
ELITA. IF WE COULD GET THAT PLACE BACK UNDER AUTOBOT CONTROL...IT COULD BE A RALLYING CRY TO THE REST OF THE AUTOBOT FACTIONS ACROSS CYBERTRON.
FROM THERE, WE COULD MAKE CONTACT WITH ALL THE REMAINING AUTOBOT FORCES.
IF THERE EVEN ARE ANY.
ELITA...RIGHT NOW YOU HAVE NO HOPE IN YOUR SPARK. I'M NOT SURE THAT ANY OF US DO ANYMORE.
MAYBE A NEW AUTOBOT COULD HELP IGNITE THAT FIRE INSIDE US ONCE AGAIN.
AND WHEN YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT?
YOU JUST TAKE OFF BACK TO EARTH? TO OPTIMUS?
NO.


"TO CARLY."
I'VE GOT A READING, ARCEE.
EARTH.
THE OLYMPIC PENNINSULA.
ENERGON LEVELS SPIKING NORTH OF US.
ROGER THAT, BEACHCOMBER.
LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE TO KEEP GOING. YOU SURE YOU STILL WANT TO GO ALONG WITH THIS?
I'M HERE, AREN'T I?
LET'S FIND THIS MAGNUS GUY ALREADY.


LOCATION UNKNOWN.
MY OLD FRIEND.
IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG.
I MUST THANK YOU.
FOR FINDING ME, WANDERING THIS DESOLATE LANDSCAPE.
BUT THANKS TO YOUR TEMPORARY SACRIFICE...


I CAN NOW, SEE.
NOW GUIDE ME TO MY WARRIORS.
TO BE CONTINUED...

THE MATRIX OF LETTERSHIP

SEND LETTERS TO
TRANSFORMERS@SKYBOUND.COM

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a safe, happy end to 2024...and boy, did we bring the FIRE to kick off the new year! Daniel, Jorge, Sarah, and Rus really delivered a masterpiece...and finally, MEGATRON. I'm your co-host and editor, Ben Abernathy, and I'm joined as always by the one and only Daniel Warren Johnson!

Happy New Year, Ben! As you're reading this we are indeed in a new year, but as I write this, it is a cold November Chicago evening, and wrestling is on in the background. My child is screaming because they don't want to go to bed. All things considered, it's a good night. I shall now find my escape in your wonderful letters, so let's bring 'em on!

Hello Transformers Team!

I decided this was finally the right time to write to you all :D I've been a huge Transformers fan for as long as I can remember, and overall, I love what the team has done with this series

I especially want to say how happy I am with how you handled Starscream--I'm a huge Starscream fangirl by the way; he's my top favorite of all time. His backstory in this series, from a young, kind spark-bot into becoming the treacherous, merciless Decepticon, is so tragic, really tugs at my heart, yet it's so interesting! All three pages of Starscream's flashback on issue 14 were absolutely brilliant, especially the third page where we see Starscream gradually fall under Megatron's dark influence--such an amazing piece of work. The cat moments were also great and even got some of my friends interested in the story when I showed them the panels

There's so much I'd love to go over in issues 13 and 14 and many questions I have to ask as well, but I don't want to take too much of your time. But for now, I'll ask a silly question: will there be more interactions between Starscream and the cat? I never realized how much I needed that in my life, hahaha.

Thank you again, peeps!

-Miriam Chico

Thank you for writing in, Miriam, and supporting our humble series. I was wondering when we'd get a letter asking about the cat haha...I'll leave that answer to Daniel!

Thanks for your wonderful letter, Miriam! I am hoping I can keep this cat around for a while, but it might be a "Where's Waldo" kind of situation. Keep your eye out in the background, you just may see that feline lurking!

"WHAH!!!

WHAT IS THAT?

I MUST KILL IT!"

- Starscream

Ok, TF14 was such a fun blast. Jason Howard absolutely slayed it on this issue. Please have him back sometime

Glad you liked what Jason did--I think he KILLED IT...and I'm talking to Jason about various Energon Universe things right now, as a matter of fact...

Jason is insanely talented. I loved him from the moment I read Astonishing Wolf Man in college, and he's only leveled up since then. He's also an amazing person that I talk to on Discord quite often. It's so great to work with wonderful and talented people!

Your team is 3 for 3 on the artists on this book. I thought I was in it for Daniel's art at first, but since you followed him with two artists (Jorge and Jason) who BOTH understood the tone and feel of what this title was trying to do, I can't put it down.

I'm in for more. Thanks to DWJ and Mike Spicer for bringing some joy back to comics, especially on characters that so many of us grew up on.

And while I got your ear… more RAVAGE please.

Michael

Thanks Michael! I firmly believe that if something looks like it was fun to make, then it naturally is fun to read. We shall keep pushing forward!

Dear Ben, DWJ, Jason, Mike and Rus,

Wow, what an issue! Transformers #14 was fantastic! As a huge fan of Starscream, these last two issues have been a dream come true!! I never thought I would get a Starscream origin, and you guys have totally delivered!! Plus we also get to raise the tally on more squished humans at the hands of our favorite Deception!!

Daniel (as a fellow Chowdahead), I read my first Transformers comic in Hopedale, MA, way back in 1985. It was issue #3 and I still remember that first page with Starscream, along with Thundercracker and Skywarp, bringing the captive Sparkplug Witwicky to the Deception base. Your awesome writing has brought new life into this character I have loved for nearly 40 years. Thank you so much! And Jason, your art is unparalleled. Each character is spot on, looking just as we remember them. Your Combaticons are beautiful! Keep up the great work! And Mike, your colors pop so freshly and vibrantly! You are all true masters of your craft.

A Chowdahead? Hell yeah! Go Celts! Go Sox! Go 80s Transformers comics! We already have so much in common!

I eagerly await the next issue and the inevitable showdown between Starscream and Soundwave. And I have no idea what to expect once Megatron finally returns, too! Sparks will certainly fly and I don't expect everyone to walk away intact after that reunion!

And for fellow Transformers fans, or just comics fans in general, be sure to check out the Acmecast podcast where Transformers scribe Daniel Warren Johnson was recently a featured guest! Those guys at Acme Comics sure know their stuff and put out a fun podcast every week.

Take care fellas! I will be counting the days until the next issue.

Bob Glass

ACME Comics are an amazing crew. If you find yourself ever in North Carolina, please go say hi to them. They are wonderful people and have taken good care of me every time I've visited. Not to mention that their two shops in Greensboro are some of the coolest I've ever walked into!

Hi,

This one was a bit of a slow burn to me. I wasn't totally immersed at the beginning because Starscream seemed a little out of character. A little too wacky. But by the end, it was another awesome triumph for the ol' Screamer. It was great to see him using guile and strategy to pull in several other Decepticons to join him as his own new loyal team members. What's particularly interesting is seeing what Starscream is like without the presence of Megatron. With the Big M around, Starscream is not only always going to lose, but his actions are going to be based on acting or reacting in relation to Megatron. He can't think on his own, all his thoughts are about Megatron. Here, he can be his own bot, and chart his own course, good or bad, instead of always circling in orbit around Megatron. Now we learn who he really is on his own.

The scene with Megatron's mind control was really interesting. I am not deep enough in Transformers lore to know if this is the first time we've seen this or if it exists in other series.

And the Squishies! That totally took me unprepared. So hilariously dark.

I also like that Starscream and his team will be inhabiting the slice of Cybertron that got cut off. I was wondering what might happen to it.

Chris

Thanks for writing in and sharing your reactions to the series...when Daniel first told me about the idea for these two issues I was immediately hooked as the relationship between Starscream and Megatron was always a big favorite of mine...and the team sure delivered!

Thanks, Chris! I can't say for sure, but I don't personally know of another instance of the kind of power dynamic Megatron has over Starscream in this series. It felt like a good way to play with "Megs as a gun" vibe, so we went with it! I'm glad we got you to stay on board and enjoy the tale we're telling! Get pumped for more Starscream!

Hi!

I mainly want to thank everyone working on this run--it's been a delight to read.

While reading the other fan letters I was happy to see that Op and Starscream are Ben's faves, because they're mine too!

Starscream's backstory was heartbreaking. He was so innocent, and after the last issue... Megatron, it is on sight. I'm relieved that things are looking up for Screamer though. I mean, he's got his Combaticon brigade, he's got a cat, and he has a personal artist on standby. Might a girl dream that there's something of a redemption arc in his future...? Maybe...? A sliver of a chance...? I'm going to keep hope alive for it

Dad! Optimus (Optidad? Dadimus?) is fantastic too, so thank you for that. I'm super partial to this softer version of him. The deer scene? Tragic, beautiful, and perfect.

Whatever happens next, I know my faves are in good hands. Thanks again!

Vic

Thanks for writing in, Vic, and you're the third person to mention Starscream's cat, haha. And a redemptive arc for Starscream? Hmm, that's an interesting idea...CAN he be redeemed?

Thanks for mentioning my writing of Optimus too, Vic! I'm so proud of that and it does NOT get old hearing people mention it. And redemption for Starscream??? Hmmm.

And that's a wrap for another Matrix of Lettership...thank you ALL for your excitement, support and letters (I wish we could print them all!) and buckle up for what's coming in #17...it's gonna blow your socks off!

-Ben

Oh my word, we just got the pencils from Jorge for 17. Like, they literally just showed up in my inbox. PREPARE YOURSELVES!!!!! These look so good! See you in 30!

-D

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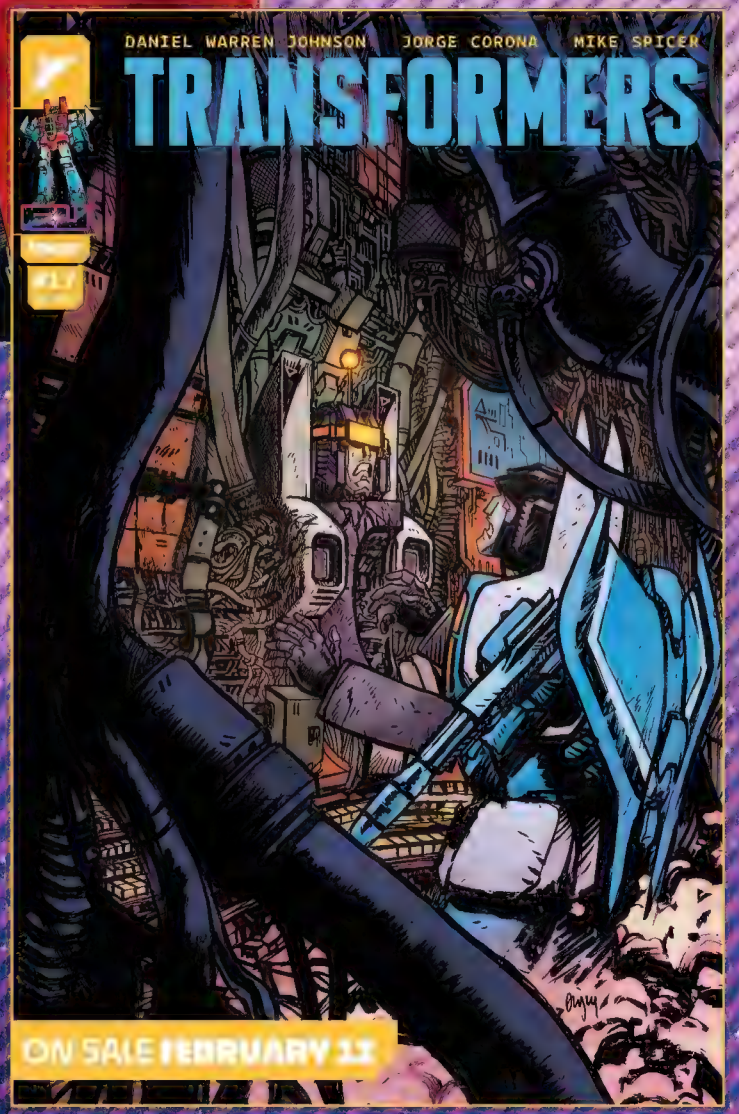

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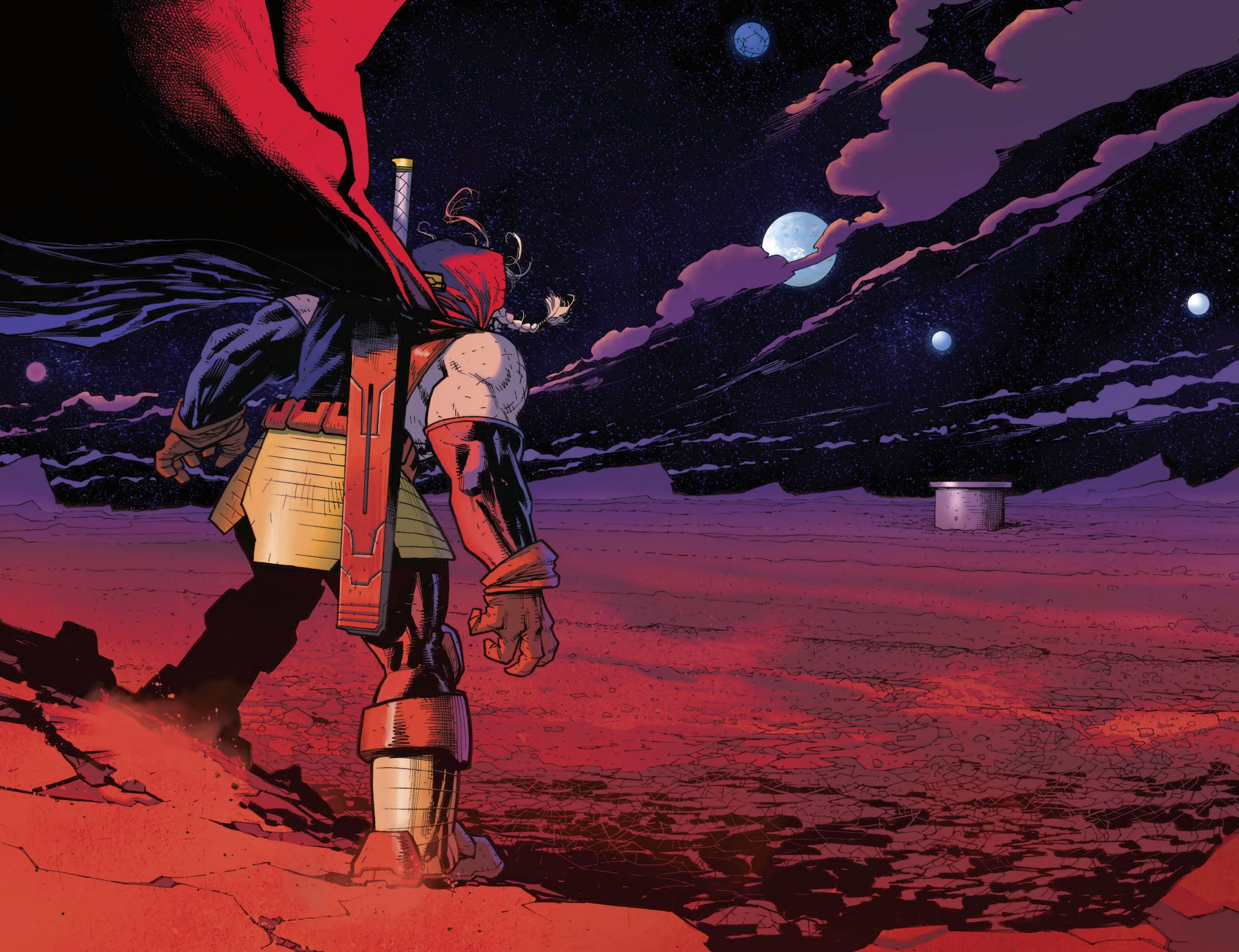

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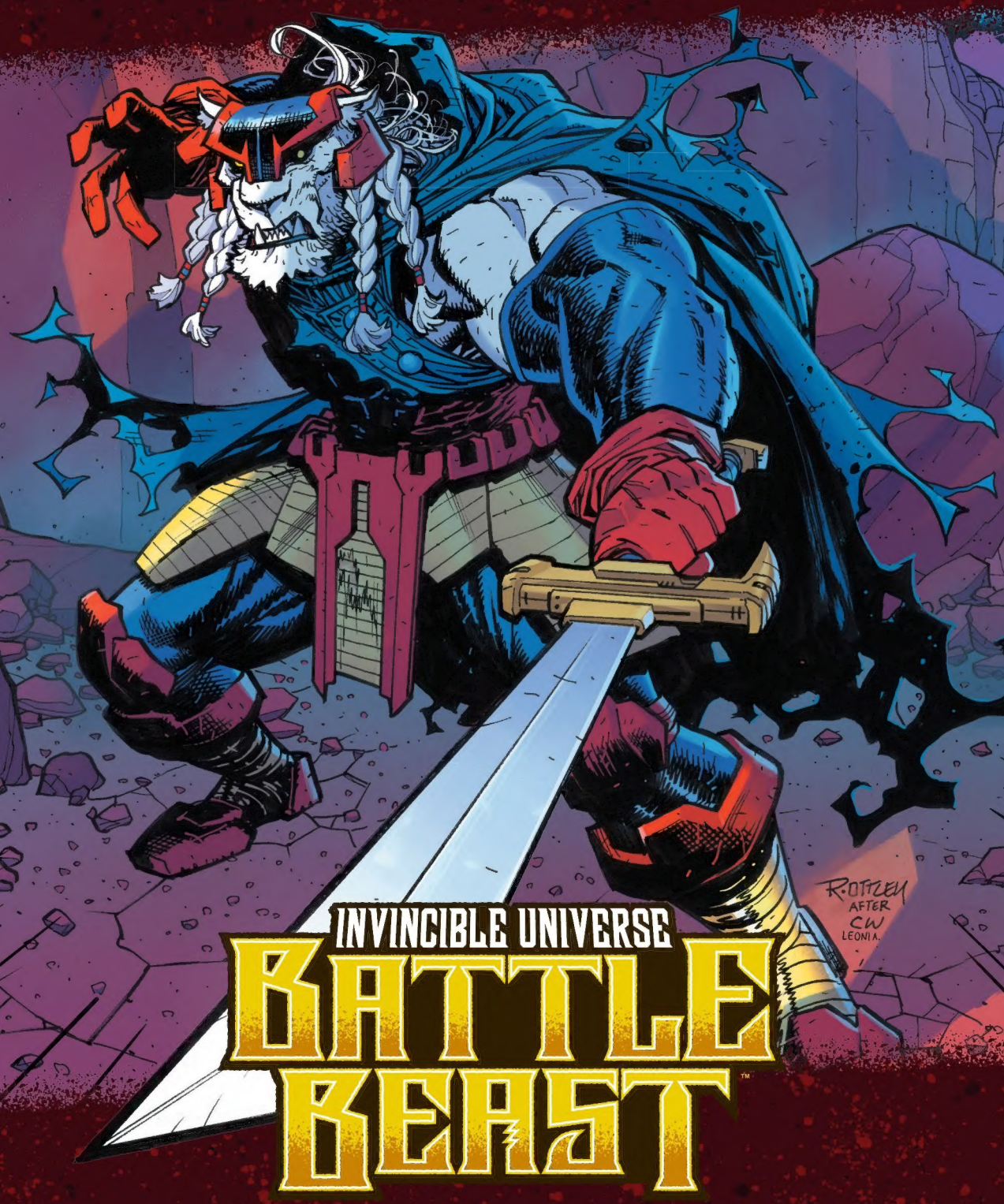

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